AMAZING TALES
10¢ JUNE
STRANGEST TALES EVER HEARD
ID
LN
MYSTERIOUS
ADVENTURES
DON'T TOUCH THEM! IT'S TERRIBLE THEY'VE COME BACK TO LIFE!
TALES OF HORROR
TERROR OF THE GHOUL'S CORPSE
GOLDFARB BAER

Supermouse
STARTLING COMICS
JETTA
MYSTERY COMICS
FANTASTIC TALES
COSMO CAT
STARTLING COMICS
STRANGE MYSTERIES
DARING ADVENTURES
STARTLING COMICS
MYSTERY Tales
EXCITING COMICS
Famous Funnies
STRANGE WORLDS
WEBCOMIC UNIVERSE.COM
JETTA
STARTLING COMICS
MYSTERY Tales
STARTLING COMICS
BARNYARD COMICS
EXCITING COMICS
EERIE
EXCITING COMICS
CASPER CAT
DARING ADVENTURES

BLACKHEADS "PET HATE"

Say Men, Girls in Choosing Date

What a "black mark" is the blackhead . . . according to men and girls popular enough to be choosy about dates!

"Nobody's dreamboat!" "Nobody's date bait!" And that's not all that's said of those who are careless about blackheads. But blackheads ARE ugly! Blackheads ARE grimy! And they DON'T look good in close-ups!

So can you blame the fellow who says, "Sure, I meet lots of girls who look cute at first glance. But if, on that second glance, I see dingy blackheads, it's *good night!*"

Or can you blame the girl who confesses, "I hate to go out with a fellow who has blackheads. If he's careless about that you're sure he'll embarrass you in other ways, too!"

But you—are YOUR ears burning? Well, you've company and, sad to say, good company. There are lots of otherwise attractive fellows and girls who could date anyone they like if they'd only realize how offensive blackheads are . . . and how easily and quickly they could get rid of them . . . if they *want* to!

"He-Man" Often Guilty of Blackhead Crime

Take your "he-man" . . . super at track, games, sports of all kinds . . . who thinks that after just a shower he's ready to go anywhere! And won't the girls all admire his muscles!

Sure they would! But not many dance floors are set up for hurdle races! You can't show off your snappy left hook when only cokes are in the ring. The "he-man" who's also clean-cut, will get the breaks wherever he is.

Even Cute Girls Become Careless

Easy, too easy, for a girl to think that if she has the latest in clothes and hair-do she needn't bother about blackheads. A little more make-up, she guesses, will take care of that. BUT MAKE-UP WON'T HIDE BLACKHEADS! Not unless it's plaster of paris, maybe! And even good make-up "slips" at a dance! So don't take chances, cute though you may be!

TAKE THESE TIPS TO BANISH BLACKHEADS

Keep skin clean by washing morning and night with warm, almost hot, water. Use good soap and plenty of it. And finish with cool water.

Extract every blackhead as soon as you see it—with a SAFE extractor. Don't use finger nails. Don't squeeze. That may mean infection, injured tissues, a marred skin.

Just be clean! Be quick! And be safe! That's easy! And that's ALL!

FELLOWS! GIRLS!
Keep Skin Clear and Clean!

UGLY BLACKHEADS OUT in Seconds with VACUTEX

NEW! SCIENTIFIC! VACUUM ACTION!

Amazing new VACUTEX is painless . . . safe . . . fast! In seconds you are rid of those ugly blackheads that clog the pores . . . make your skin look grimy and dingy . . . give others such a wrong impression of you. VACUTEX creates a gentle vacuum pressure around the blackhead and extracts it—quickly!—without injury to tender skin tissues. Keep skin always clear this new scientific way. Without painful squeezing! Without dangerous infection from germy fingers! Just place VACUTEX over blackhead and draw back extractor. Blackhead's out! Simple! But you'll be delighted by your instantly improved appearance. Others will notice your clearer, cleaner skin! Try VACUTEX—now!

RUSH COUPON NOW!

10 DAY TRIAL OFFER

Don't send a penny. Mail coupon and pay postman only $1.00 plus postage. Or save all postage by enclosing $1.00 with guarantee coupon. If not thrilled to be rid of embarrassing hated blackheads this new quick way—just return VACUTEX in 10 days and get $1 back. Order today!

No Squeezing
No Infection
No Injury
to Skin
Tissues!

Just place VACUTEX over blackhead—release extractor—and blackhead's out!

10 DAY TRIAL GUARANTEE

BALLCO PRODUCTS COMPANY, Dept. 106
19 West 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.

☐ Enclosed find $1.00. Send me VACUTEX postpaid.
☐ Ship C.O.D. I will pay postman $1.00 plus postage.

My dollar will be refunded if I am not delighted.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

SORRY NO C.O.D. OUTSIDE OF U.S.A.

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CURSE OF THE WITCH

DOOMED TO HOVER BETWEEN THE WORLD OF THE LIVING AND THE RESTING PLACE OF THE DEAD__
CURSED TO SUFFER HERSELF__AND
FATED TO INFLICT DEATH, FIRE, AND ASHES UPON THE INHABITANTS OF THE LIVING WORLD__
ONLY ONE THING COULD SAVE HER FROM HERSELF AND, AT THE SAME TIME, RID THE WORLD OF____A WITCH!

JOHN CAHILL, PROMINENT BOSTON ATTORNEY, AND HIS JUNIOR PARTNER, PHILLIP JONES WERE ON THEIR WAY TO CAHILL'S ANCESTRAL HOME IN SALEM FOR A WELL-DESERVED WEEK-END OF RELAXATION.

SURELY YOU'RE JOKING WITH ME. YOU DON'T EXPECT.... LOOK, JOHN, THAT OLD HOUSE! IT'S ON FIRE!
IT'S BURNING LIKE TINDER! THE PLACE MUST BE CENTURIES OLD!
NOTHING WE CAN DO. BY THE LOOKS OF THE HOUSE, NO ONE HAS LIVED THERE FOR YEARS ANYWAY.
NO, THE HOUSE ISN'T EMPTY! LOOK, JOHN, UP THERE IN THAT TOP STORY WINDOW! THERE'S A WOMAN IN THERE!
BY JUPITER, YOU'RE RIGHT!
HELP
WE CAN'T LET HER DIE IN THERE! I'M GOING TO TRY TO SAVE HER!
NO, YOU CAN'T GO INTO THAT INFERNO! YOU'D NEVER GET OUT ALIVE, MUCH LESS STAND A CHANCE TO SAVE WHOEVER IS IN THERE!
LET ME GO, JOHN! LET ME GO, I SAY!
STOP, YOU FOOL! CAN'T YOU SEE THE WHOLE THING IS COLLAPSING? SHE'S BEEN BURIED ALREAD--NO! SHE'S BEEN THROWN CLEAR!

THE GIRL HAD INDEED BEEN THROWN CLEAR, BUT AS THE TWO MEN RUSHED TOWARD HER PROSTRATE FORM, NEITHER HELD MUCH HOPE FOR HER SURVIVING THE FIRE AND THE LONG FALL.
GOOD LORD, WHAT A TRAGEDY! AND SHE WAS ONLY A GIRL TOO!
NOT MUCH CHANCE OF HER LIVING THROUGH ALL THAT... SHE MUST BE DEAD... WAIT! I THINK I SAW HER MOVE!
SHE'S ALIVE AND UNHURT! WHY, SHE ISN'T EVEN BURNED OR BRUISED! IT'S A MIRACLE!
OH, THANK YOU! THANK YOU BOTH, BUT I'M ALL RIGHT. I..I'M NOT HURT.
WELL, THEN, CAN WE TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE? TO FRIENDS OR RELATIVES, PERHAPS?
I... WELL... I HAVE NO FRIENDS AND I HAVEN'T HAD ANY RELATIVES IN A LONG WHILE.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN THERE? HOW DID THE FIRE START?
LEAVE HER ALONE, JOHN! AFTER WHAT SHE'S JUST BEEN THROUGH, SHE'S IN NO CONDITION TO ANSWER FOOL QUESTIONS! COME WITH US, YOU CAN'T STAY HERE.
THE QUESTIONS WHICH RUSHED TO CAHILL'S LIPS HAD BEEN STIFLED BY HIS FRIEND, BUT THE MYSTERY OF WHO THE GIRL WAS AND WHAT SHE HAD BEEN DOING IN THAT HOUSE BOTHERED JOHN CAHILL.... PERHAPS, THAT IS WHY HE DID NOT SEE THAT CURVE IN THE ROAD.....
DON'T WORRY, MISS, AFTER YOU GET IN A GOOD HOT TUB YOU'LL FEEL MUCH BET.... LOOK OUT!
I..IT'S TOO LATE! WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!
I..I'M ALL RIGHT. SEE AFTER YOUR FRIEND.
PHILLIP! PHILLIP!
OH-H-H!!

LUCKILY NONE WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED, BUT THE AUTOMOBILE WAS A TOTAL LOSS...
COME AWAY.. WHEN THE FIRE HITS THE TANK, THE WHOLE THING WILL EXPLODE.
OOOH! MY HEAD STILL HURTS!

JOHN CAHILL'S HOME WAS NOT TOO FAR FROM THE SCENE OF THE CRASH, AND AFTER A SHORT WALK CAHILL, JONES, AND ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD (FOR THAT WAS HER NAME) ARRIVED. THAT EVENING...
AH-H! A FINE DINNER! I THINK I'LL GO RIGHT TO BED. I'VE HAD MORE THAN MY DAILY QUOTA OF EXCITEMENT.
I THINK I'LL STAY UP AWHILE...UH..WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A SHORT STROLL, ABIGAIL, BEFORE YOU TURN IN?

ABIGAIL..ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD. SOMEHOW YOU FIT THAT NAME PERFECTLY. IT'S AN OLD-FASHIONED NAME, AND YOU ARE LIKE A VISION OF LOVELINESS FROM OUT OF THE PAST.
OH, PHILLIP. YOU'VE BEEN SO KIND TO ME.. YOU AND JOHN. YOU MUST SEND ME AWAY! I CAN BRING ONLY TROUBLE TO BOTH OF YOU!

YOU? TROUBLE? ABIGAIL, FROM THE MOMENT I SAW YOU--OH,OH!
HI, THERE, YOU TWO! I COULDN'T SLEEP AFTER ALL. MIND IF I JOIN YOU?

THE NEXT MORNING...
LET'S HAVE A PARTY TODAY TO CELEBRATE OUR GOOD FORTUNE IN ESCAPING DEATH YESTERDAY!
WE'LL NEED FLOWERS!
THE SHEARS ARE IN THE GARAGE, ABIGAIL.

BUT THE PARTY NEVER CAME ABOUT, FOR A FEW HOURS AFTER ABIGAIL HAD TAKEN THE SHEARS TO CUT FLOWERS... THE GARAGE BURNED TO THE GROUND.
IT'S NO USE, SIR. AIN'T NO HALF DOZEN PAILS 'O WATER GOING TO PUT OUT THAT FIRE.
LUCKILY IT DIDN'T START WHILE ABIGAIL WAS IN THERE! THE POOR GIRL HAS HAD ENOUGH FIRE AND TRAGEDY.

AND A FEW DAYS LATER...
SO YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT CAUSED THE GARAGE TO BURN, EH?
NO SIR, I DON'T.
FIRE! FIRE! HELP!

WHEN THE MEN REACHED THE CARETAKER'S LITTLE HOUSE, IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE. THE HOUSE, THE CARETAKER'S WIFE, AND BROTHER, HAD BEEN REDUCED TO ASHES.
ABIGAIL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
..ER.. I WAS TAKING A A WALK AND I SAW THE FIRE. IT ..UH.. WAS TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING.
M-M-MY WIFE.. M-MY BROTHER! TH-THEY WERE IN THERE!!

M-M-MY WIFE.. M-MY BROTHER.. MY WIFE.. MY.. B-BROTHER...

THERE'S SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT ALL THESE FIRES. THE OLD HOUSE ON THE ROAD, THE GARAGE, AND NOW THIS TERRIBLE THING. AND COME TO THINK OF IT, MY CAR CRACKED UP AND BURNED!.. HELLO, WHAT'S THIS?

HOW STRANGE TO FIND ABIGAIL'S SHAWL IN THE ASHES! IT ALONE WAS UNTOUCHED BY THE FLAMES. AND HOW DID IT GET THERE? A FANTASTIC THOUGHT OCCURED TO JOHN CAHILL..
IT'S RIDICULOUS.. AND YET.. FIRE DOES FOLLOW WHEREEVER SHE GOES.. AND NEVER HARMS HER. EVEN HER CLOTHING WILL NOT BURN!

THERE WAS A RHYME MY GRANDMOTHER USED TO RECITE WHEN I WAS A CHILD IN SALEM.. "AN INNOCENT WOMAN BURNED AS A WITCH.. SHALL RETURN FROM THE ASHES, RETURN FROM HER DITCH.. SHE'LL BRING WITH HER FIRE.." ..AND.. AND.. I CAN'T RECALL THE LAST LINE..

ALL DAY CAHILL PORED THROUGH HIS LIBRARY ON SALEM HISTORY. FINALLY...
IT'S HERE! JUST AS I SUSPECTED, BUT DARED NOT BELIEVE... THE NAME OF ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD, BURNED AS A WITCH, SALEM, 1693!

IN THIS CENTURIES OLD VOLUME, JOHN CAHILL READ THE ACCOUNT OF THE TRIAL OF ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD.
BURN THE WITCH! BURN ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD THE WITCH!!
BURN HER! TO THE STAKE WITH HER!

ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD, YOU ARE ACCUSED OF BEING A WITCH. YOU CANNOT TESTIFY IN YOUR OWN BEHALF BECAUSE IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT ALL WITCHES LIE!
I'M INNOCENT! NO, NO! I'M INNOCENT!
LIE! LIE!

SHE LOOKED AT MY HEN AND IT WOULDN'T LAY!
SHE PASSED MY HOUSE AND MY COW'S MILK SOURED!
SHE LOOKS GUILTY WHEN SHE PASSES THE CHURCH!
ENOUGH! TAKE HER TO THE STAKE!

"AND THUS," JOHN CAHILL READ, "PASSETH YE BEAUTIFUL WITCH OF SALEM TOWN, PERISHING IN THE FLAMES AT THE STAKE."

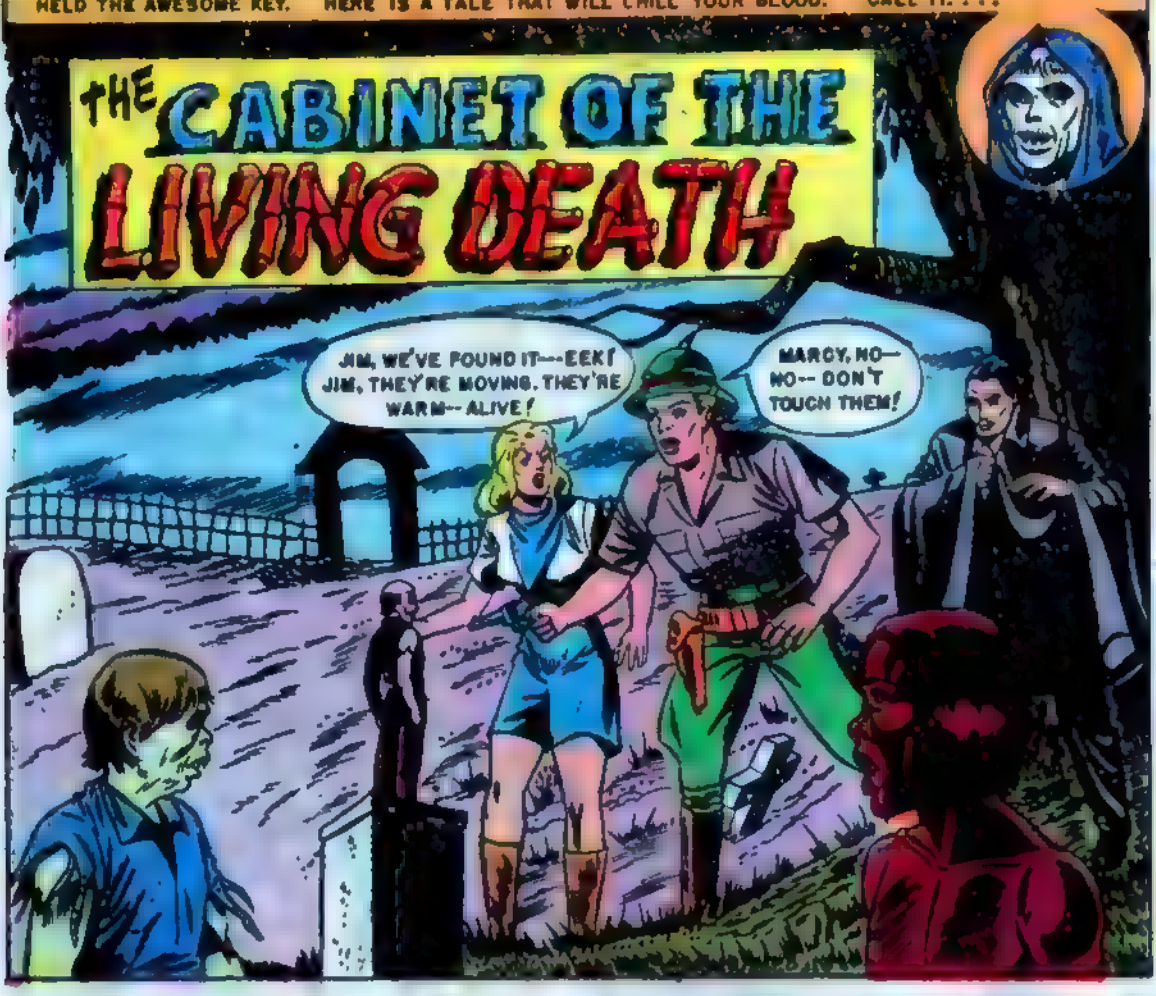
IT'S..FANTASTIC! A WITCH! AND YET, IS IT SO FANTASTIC? THE SAME NAME... THE BURNINGS...HER INABILITY TO BE HURT.. IS IT SO FANTASTIC.... I MUST TELL PHILLIP!

ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! YOU ARE A WITCH! CAN YOU DENY THAT YOU WERE BURNED AT THE STAKE IN SALEM MORE THAN 250 YEARS AGO? CAN YOU?
JOHN!

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS MAD JOKE? HOW DARE YOU SPEAK THAT WAY TO HER! YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW IT NOW, JOHN CAHILL. I AM IN LOVE WITH ABIGAIL!
HARDLY HAD PHILLIP JONES UTTERED THE WORDS, THAT HE LOVED ABIGAIL, WHEN AN INCREDIBLE THING TOOK PLACE ...
AHA! HE HAS THE WORDS!
HEE HEE! THE CURSE IS BROKEN!
GOOD LORD!
HE TOLD ME HE LOVES ME! THE SPELL IS BROKEN! LEAVE ME ALONE!
NO, ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD, YOU MUST RETURN TO THE LAND OF SHADES WITH US. YOUR STAY ON EARTH WITH THE LIVING WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE CURSED. LOOK, EVEN AS WE SPEAK, YOUR AGE BEGINS TO SHOW!
ABIGAIL SHEFFIELD WAS WRONGLY BURNED AS A WITCH. BY THE TIME-OLD CURSE, AN INNOCENT WITCH IS REQUIRED TO ROAM THE LIVING WORLD, SOWING FIRE, DEATH, AND ASH WHERE SHE WALKED. NOW SHE IS FREE... TO RETURN TO THE GRAVE!
AND HAVING FINISHED, THE GHOSTS OF THE CURSED PURITANS VANISHED, AND ABIGAIL WITH THEM. ALL THAT REMAINED WAS A SMALL MOUND OF DUST WHERE ONCE THE BEAUTIFUL ABIGAIL HAD STOOD.
JOHN, SAY SOMETHING! SPEAK TO ME BEFORE I LOSE MY MIND!
MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME OF SUCH THINGS, BUT I NEVER BELIEVED IT TO BE TRUE! LORD HELP US! NOW I REMEMBER HER VERY WORDS ...
"AN INNOCENT WOMAN BURNED AS A WITCH... SHALL RETURN FROM THE ASHES, RETURN FROM THE DITCH... SHE'LL BRING WITH HER, FIRE, BRING IT SHE MUST ... UNTIL A MAN'S LOVE CAN RETURN HER TO DUST..."DON'T GRIEVE, PHIL. IT'S BEST SHE IS GONE.
IT WAS A WITCH I LOVED. MY LOVE WON HER AND FREED HER. NO ONE WILL EVER BELIEVE OUR STORY!
THE END

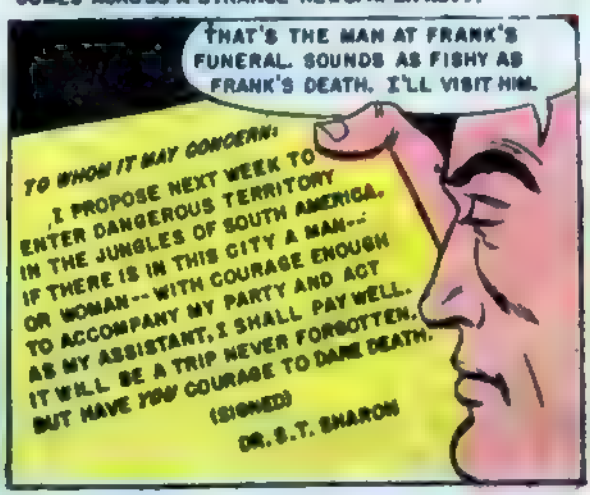
THE FIRST TIME JIM BIXSON HEARD THE AGONIZED WHIMPERS HE WAS SURE HIS EARS AND THE TROPICS WERE PLAYING STRANGE TRICKS. BUT AS TIME WENT ON, THE KEENING WAILS SENT SHIVERS OF FEAR THROUGH HIM. FOR SUDDENLY, JIM BIXON IDENTIFIED THE EERIE NOISES -- THEY WERE HUMANS. THE CRIES OF UNFORTUNATES, IN DISTRESS. BUT WHAT KIND OF HUMANS? ONLY DR. SHARON KNEW THE ANSWER, ONLY DR. SHARON HELD THE AWESOME KEY. HERE IS A TALE THAT WILL CHILL YOUR BLOOD. CALL IT. . . .

THE CABINET OF THE LIVING DEATH



IT WAS AT EXPLORER FRANK CHAPMAN'S STRANGE FUNERAL THAT BIXON FIRST MET DR. SHARON...

AT THE PIONEERS' CLUB IN NEW YORK JIM BIXON COMES ACROSS A STRANGE NEWSPAPER AD...



MEANWHILE MARCY MERRY, A REPORTER ON THE DAILY TAB, HAD BEEN SENT TO DR. SHARON'S OFFICE TO GET A STORY ON THE STRANGE AD. THERE SHE MET BIXON...
WHAT A STRANGE AD. HOW PECULIAR I FEEL, BUT IT'S A STORY I MUST GET! WHAT AN EERIE OFFICE!
I'M JIM BIXON. I'M LOOKING TO GO ON SHARON'S JAUNT.
JIM BIXON, THE EXPLORER AND WAR HERO! WELL, THIS WILL REALLY MAKE A STORY! I WONDER WHERE THE DOCTOR IS?
RIGHT HERE, YOUNG LADY. WHAT IS IT? NO STORY! ANYTHING ELSE?
THUS, MY NEXT INTRODUCTION TO DR. SHARON. HE SEEMED FRIENDLY ENOUGH, BUT I COULDN'T FIGURE WHY HE DIDN'T WANT A STORY. AFTER ALL--HE'D ADVERTISED.
SORRY, YOUNG WOMAN, YOU'LL HAVE TO PEDDLE YOUR PAPERS ELSEWHERE. MY AD WAS ENOUGH PUBLICITY. BUT NECESSARY. BIXON, COME IN.
SORRY, MISS MERRY. MAYBE I CAN GIVE YOU A STORY WHEN--AND IF--I COME BACK.
IT SEEMED STRANGE TO ME EVEN THEN, THIS IMMACULATE, PRECISE MAN USING SO DEPRESSING A PLACE AS AN OFFICE. BUT EXPLORERS DO STRANGE THINGS...
I SUPPOSE YOU GOT LOTS OF ANSWERS TO YOUR AD, DOCTOR? SORRY I'M LATE.
YOU'RE NOT LATE, MR. BIXON. WE DON'T SAIL UNTIL MIDNITE. YOU, ME, AND MY DOLLS!
I HAD NO TIME TO REALIZE, THEN, THE DOCTOR HADN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION. HAD ANYONE REPLIED BUT ME? AND THAT GIRL?
WHERE'LL I PUT THIS? THEY SAID UP HERE.
NO...NO...TAKE IT DOWNSTAIRS TO THE LOADING DOCK. LOOK OUT!
YOU FOOL, YOU BLITHERING FOOL--GET OUT BEFORE I KILL YOU! THESE DOLLS...MY DOLLS...MY...
TAKE IT EASY, DOC. THEY'RE ALL THERE. THEY'RE ONLY DOLLS! CAN I HELP YOU WITH THEM?
CRASH!

NO... NO... NO HELP, THANK YOU. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THEM. PLEASE GO, BIXON. I'LL SEE YOU ON SHIP TONIGHT. IT'S THE FERRY QUEEN.

BIXON SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEN THOSE DOLLS EXERTED A STRANGE MAD INFLUENCE OVER DR. SHARON. BUT ALL HE COULD SEE WAS A DISTRAUGHT MAN. ANYWAY HE WANTED TO LEARN THE TRUTH ABOUT FRANK CHAPMAN SO LISTEN TO HIM TELL HIS STORY.

I WANTED DESPERATELY TO FIND OUT ABOUT FRANK CHAPMAN, SO I QUESTIONED NOTHING. NEVERTHELESS, I COULDN'T SHAKE OFF A STRANGE FEELING THAT SUDDENLY CREPT OVER ME.

WHAT'S GOT INTO ME? I'M NOT SCARED, BUT IT FEELS LIKE ICY FINGERS ARE HANGING ON MY HEART.

I'VE BEEN WAITING. WE CAN SHOVE OFF NOW.

WELL, DOCTOR. HERE I AM!

AND SO WE NOSED OUT, HEADING FOR SOUTH AMERICA AND TERRAIN NEW TO ME. INCIDENTALLY, MY EFFORTS TO FIND SOMEONE WHO KNEW OF SHARON HAD FAILED. BUT THIS WAS EXCITEMENT, MY LIFE. SO WHY SHOULD I FEAR?

SO WE WERE AFTER JU-JU DOLLS / CRUEL SOUTH AMERICAN NATIVES HAD MADE AND WORSHIPED THE EVIL THINGS FOR CENTURIES. MOURNFUL WHIMPERS SUDDENLY CAME TO MY EARS AS I STOOD BY THE RAIL... AND THEN...

YES JIM, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LONE WOLF. I KNOW I WAS UPSET TODAY, BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT JU-JU DOLLS ARE WORTH. AND WHEN I COME BACK-- I'LL HAVE MORE TREASURES LIKE THEM!

IS THAT WHAT WE'RE GOING AFTER?

THAT'S STRANGE. THERE'S NO WIND. BUT THOSE NOISES... I'D BETTER LOOK BELOW.

I DECIDED TO GO DOWN INTO THE CARGO HOLD AND INVESTIGATE. BUT THE NOISE SUDDENLY STOPPED AS I GOT THERE.

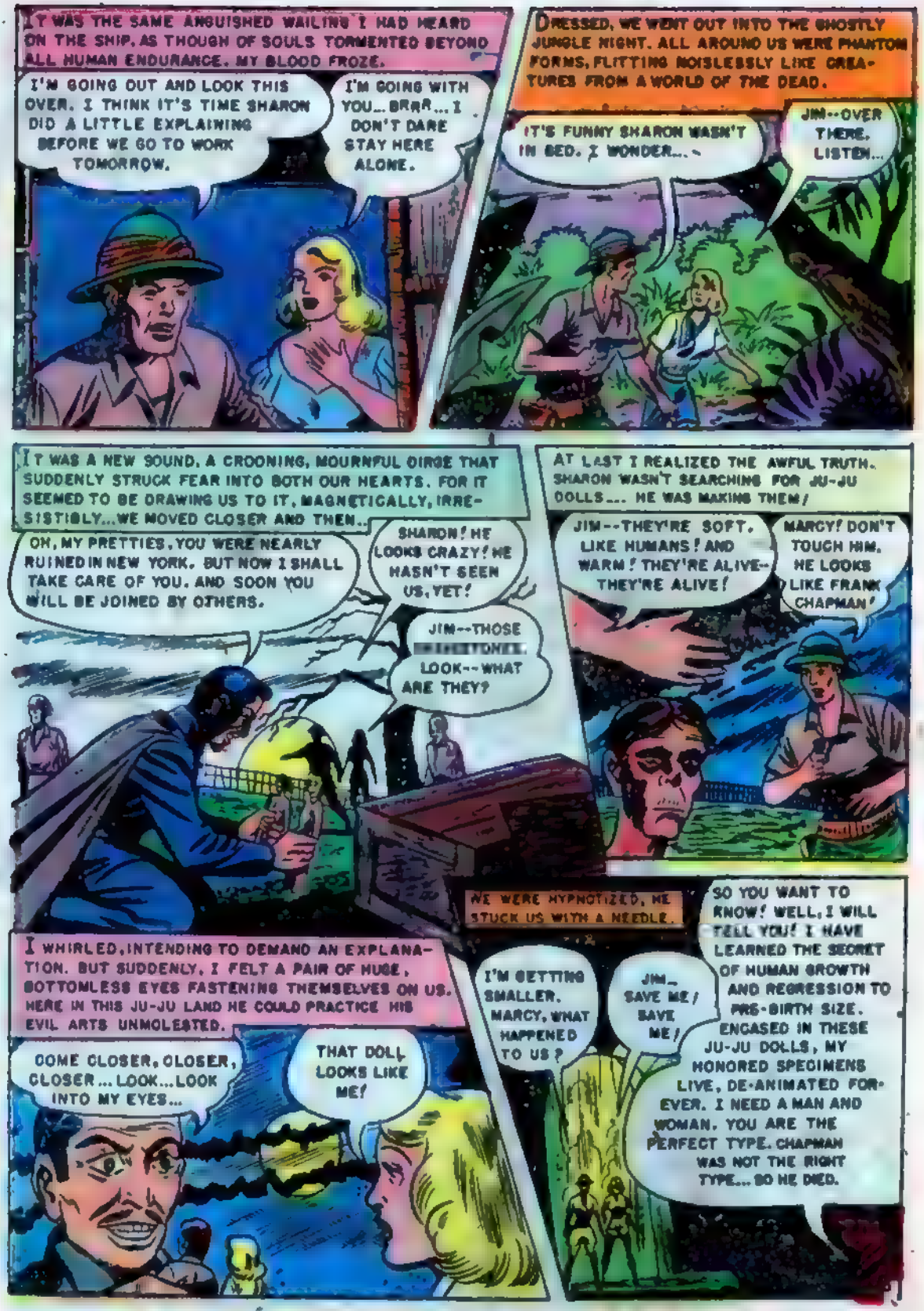
I COULD HAVE SWORN THAT NOISE CAME FROM HERE. WHAT'S THAT?

SUDDENLY, A FIGURE DETACHED ITSELF FROM THE GHOSTLY SHADOWS.

HERE, YOU, WHAT ARE YOU DOING---- *MARGY MERRY!*

OH, JIM! I'M SO FRIGHTENED! I COULDN'T KEEP AWAY! I HAD TO COME!

I FELT A SUDDEN DRAFT OF COLD AIR. PANIC-STRICKEN, I REACHED FOR MY GUN. BUT IT WAS ONLY...
DR. SHARON!
WHAT ARE YOU SNOOPING AROUND FOR. I TOLD YOU THERE WAS NO STORY. I'LL PUT YOU IN IRONS. I'LL...
TAKE IT EASY, DOC. SHE'S BADLY FRIGHTENED. BESIDES, SHE WAS ONLY TRYING TO DO HER JOB.
I MANAGED TO CALM DR. SHARON DOWN. HE ORDERED MARCY TO BED, THEN DISAPPEARED, SAYING I COULD LOOK OUT FOR HER.
NOW WHAT SCARED YOU SO MUCH.
I--I DON'T LIKE TO THINK OF IT. IT WAS HIDEOUS. THOSE CRIES, JUST LIKE HUMANS. BUT THERE WAS NO ONE AROUND. NOTHING--BUT THIS. I FOUND IT ON THE FLOOR.
WELL, I PROMISED MARCY. THE DOCTOR NEVER MENTIONED THE DOLL. FIVE WEEKS LATER WE WERE FIGHTING OUR WAY THROUGH THE JUNGLES. HE HAD AGREED TO LET MARCY COME ALONG.
WHY IT'S A JU-JU DOLL. IT'S ME! I'LL SPEAK TO SHARON ABOUT THIS.
NO. NO. I WANT YOU TO PUT IT BACK. PLEASE, JIM, CALL IT A HUNCH--BUT SAY NOTHING TO HIM. PROMISE.
THERE IT IS, MY LABORATORY AND FIELD OFFICE.
"BOYS NO GO. JU-JU.
IT'S NONSENSE, MARCY, BUT THEY ARE AFRAID OF HIS JU-JU DOLLS. I DON'T KNOW WHY. DID YOU KNOW THIS, DOCTOR?
I DID. THAT'S WHY I SAID IT WAS DANGEROUS. WANT TO GO BACK WITH THEM, BIXON.
I'M IN UNTIL THE END. I'LL PACK THIS STUFF IN.
I'M STICKING UNTIL THE END, TOO.
NATURALLY, HE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW PROPHETIC THOSE WORDS WERE. BUT THAT NIGHT...
JIM. GET UP. LISTEN!
WHAT IS IT? YES--I HEAR IT NOW. WHERE'S THE DOCTOR?
BLAM!
4


IT WAS THE SAME ANGUISHED WAILING I HAD HEARD ON THE SHIP, AS THOUGH OF SOULS TORMENTED BEYOND ALL HUMAN ENDURANCE. MY BLOOD FROZE.
I'M GOING OUT AND LOOK THIS OVER. I THINK IT'S TIME SHARON DID A LITTLE EXPLAINING BEFORE WE GO TO WORK TOMORROW.
I'M GOING WITH YOU... BRRR... I DON'T DARE STAY HERE ALONE.
DRESSED, WE WENT OUT INTO THE GHOSTLY JUNGLE NIGHT. ALL AROUND US WERE PHANTOM FORMS, FLITTING NOISLESSLY LIKE CREATURES FROM A WORLD OF THE DEAD.
IT'S FUNNY SHARON WASN'T IN BED. I WONDER...
JIM--OVER THERE. LISTEN...
IT WAS A NEW SOUND, A CROONING, MOURNFUL DIRGE THAT SUDDENLY STRUCK FEAR INTO BOTH OUR HEARTS. FOR IT SEEMED TO BE DRAWING US TO IT, MAGNETICALLY, IRRESISTIBLY...WE MOVED CLOSER AND THEN..
OH, MY PRETTIES, YOU WERE NEARLY RUINED IN NEW YORK. BUT NOW I SHALL TAKE CARE OF YOU. AND SOON YOU WILL BE JOINED BY OTHERS.
SHARON! HE LOOKS CRAZY! HE HASN'T SEEN US, YET!
JIM--THOSE [redacted] LOOK--WHAT ARE THEY?
AT LAST I REALIZED THE AWFUL TRUTH. SHARON WASN'T SEARCHING FOR JU-JU DOLLS... HE WAS MAKING THEM!
JIM--THEY'RE SOFT, LIKE HUMANS! AND WARM! THEY'RE ALIVE--THEY'RE ALIVE!
MARCY! DON'T TOUCH HIM. HE LOOKS LIKE FRANK CHAPMAN!
I WHIRLED, INTENDING TO DEMAND AN EXPLANATION. BUT SUDDENLY, I FELT A PAIR OF HUGE, BOTTOMLESS EYES FASTENING THEMSELVES ON US. HERE IN THIS JU-JU LAND HE COULD PRACTICE HIS EVIL ARTS UNMOLESTED.
COME CLOSER, CLOSER, CLOSER... LOOK... LOOK INTO MY EYES...
THAT DOLL LOOKS LIKE ME!
WE WERE HYPNOTIZED, HE STUCK US WITH A NEEDLE.
I'M GETTING SMALLER. MARCY, WHAT HAPPENED TO US?
JIM... SAVE ME! SAVE ME!
SO YOU WANT TO KNOW! WELL, I WILL TELL YOU! I HAVE LEARNED THE SECRET OF HUMAN GROWTH AND REGRESSION TO PRE-BIRTH SIZE. ENCASED IN THESE JU-JU DOLLS, MY HONORED SPECIMENS LIVE, DE-ANIMATED FOREVER. I NEED A MAN AND WOMAN. YOU ARE THE PERFECT TYPE. CHAPMAN WAS NOT THE RIGHT TYPE... SO HE DIED.

SHARON TOLD US THE JU-JU DOLLS WERE OUR COFFINS AND WHEN THE TIME CAME TO PROVE HIS THEORY TO THE WORLD, HE WOULD REANIMATE US..... HIS PERFECT SPECIMENS.
I SHALL TAKE THOSE DOWN IN A MINUTE, SIXON. AND THEN YOU SHALL JOIN THEM--THOSE OTHER DOLLS FOREVER!
THIS NEEDLE WILL DEANIMATE YOU INTO DOLLS OF LIVING DEATH
AS THE NEEDLE SANK INTO BOTH OF US, SHARON DID NOT RECKON WITH MARCY, WHO SUDDENLY BIT HIS FINGER WITH HER SHARP TEETH.
AARGGHH, GET AWAY!
MARCY'S BITE MADE SHARON TOUCH THE POINT OF THE NEEDLE...
UGH! YOU FIEND, YOU LITTLE FIEND! I'LL...
AND THEN A STRANGE THING AROSE FROM THOSE TOMB-STONES AROUND US. IT WAS FRANK CHAPMAN OR HIS GHOST.
A MIRACULOUS TRANSFORMATION TOOK PLACE. HIS BODY BEGAN TO SHAKE AND...
JIM! HE'S GETTING AS SMALL AS US. OH WHAT WILL---
HAPPEN? I DON'T KNOW. BUT IT'S A CHANCE FOR LIFE AGAINST *DEATH!* OR HIS LIEUTENANT!

THE STRANGE THING KILLED DR. SHARON AND ANY CHANCE OF OUR BEING SAVED—
LET ME GO, CHAPMAN. YOU ARE DEAD...
FRANK CHAPMAN'S GHOST ENTOMBED US IN OUR JU-JU DOLLS— MERRY AND ME.
PLEASE LET US GO. WE ARE ALIVE.
STOP! WE ARE NOT DEAD.
IN THE GRAVEYARD THE DOLLS LAY FOR YEARS UNTIL THE DAY ANOTHER EXPEDITION FROM ARGENTINA CAME ALONG...
WHAT A WONDERFUL FIND..PERFECT SPECIMENS OF JU-JU ART. THEY LOOK SO ALIVE, THEY SEEM TO BE TRYING TO SPEAK. I MUST SEND THEM TO THE MUSEUM.
WE TRIED TO TELL THEM WE WERE ALIVE. THEY COULDN'T HEAR US!
ONE DAY THE CURATOR OF THE SANTOS MUSEUM RECEIVES A LETTER...
AND SO WE ARE SENDING YOU THESE WONDERFUL JU-JU DOLLS AND WITH THEM THE STRANGE STORY THE NATIVES TELL ABOUT A DR. SHARON WHO MADE THEM...
SINCERELY,
JOHN C. SPENCER
AND SO THE DOLLS WERE PUT ON DISPLAY AT THE MUSEUM...
AREN'T THEY REMARKABLY LIFE-LIKE.
WE TRIED TO SPEAK, TO CALL OUT TO THEM— 'HELP US, HELP US'— BUT NO ONE COULD HEAR —NO ONE
HELP US... WE ARE NOT DEAD!
THEY CAN NOT HEAR US.

MARK OF THE TOMB
NO... NO ... DON'T, I'LL NEVER REVEAL YOUR SECRET... DON'T... OOOOOOHHHHH!
A SINISTER FIGURE STALKING THE EERIE NIGHT... A TERRIFIED SCREAM TEARS FROM A HUMAN THROAT AS GLEAMING FANGS BITE INTO SOFT WHITE FLESH. AND THEN... NOTHING BUT SILENCE... GRAVEYARD SILENCE! THERE IS ONLY THE MOURNFUL WIND CRYING OVER THE BLOODLESS BODY LYING IN GHOSTLY SHADOWS WHICH HIDE THE CHILLING...
"MARK OF THE TOMB"
BUT WHEN POLICE AND CORONER ARRIVED... ALL WAS STILL, AS STILL AS THE WITHERED AND LIFELESS BODY SO WANTONLY ATTACKED.
HE'S DEAD ALL RIGHT. LOOKS LIKE HE FELL OVER HIS LANTERN, CUT HIMSELF AND BLED TO DEATH.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THESE THINGS THAT LOOK LIKE TEETHMARKS, DOC? SEEMS TO ME I READ...
GRANT
YEAH, I KNOW, ROONEY, "DRACULA." I SUPPOSE YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME MY BUSINESS AND THAT A CREATURE OF DARKNESS DID THIS. THERE'S NO SUCH THING.
AW, I KNOW THAT, DOC. I WAS ONLY THINKING...

THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT DETECTIVE ROONEY DIDN'T THINK LONG OR FAR ENOUGH. FOR JUST A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, A SINISTER FIGURE STANDS LISTENING...

FOOL OF A DOCTOR... SO HE DOESN'T BELIEVE..

NATURALLY, THE STORY RATED SPACE IN THE NEXT DAY'S PAPER HEADLINES AND IT JUST HAPPENED TO BE WHAT THE YOUNG SCIENTIST, DR. JIM DREXEL, WAS LOOKING AT.

WHY THIS IS TERRIBLE. THE OLD GRAVE-KEEPER KILLED. I'LL HAVE TO ASK ROONEY ABOUT THAT, SINCE HE'S ON THE CASE....OH, DR. MARSAK.. I'M SORRY!

MAN KILL CEMETE

WHAT'S SO ENGROSSING IN THAT PAPER, JIM? I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU HAD AN EYE FOR A PRETTY GIRL, SO I BRING YOU MISS KATHY CORBIN... AND YOU DON'T EVEN LOOK UP.

GLAD TO MEET YOU, KATHY. IT'S THIS HORRIBLE ACCIDENT LAST NIGHT AT THE CEMETERY, DOCTOR...NEAR YOUR TOMB.

TOMB? YOUR TOMB... ...DR. MARSAK?

YES, MY DEAR. I HAVE A PET THEORY THAT AFTER A CERTAIN AGE, ONE SHOULD PREPARE FOR DEATH. SO SINCE I HAVE A WORTHY SUCCESSOR IN DR. DREXEL, WHY SHOULD I NOT DEVOTE MYSELF TO PREPARING FOR THE HEREAFTER?

WHEN DR. MARSAK LEAVES...

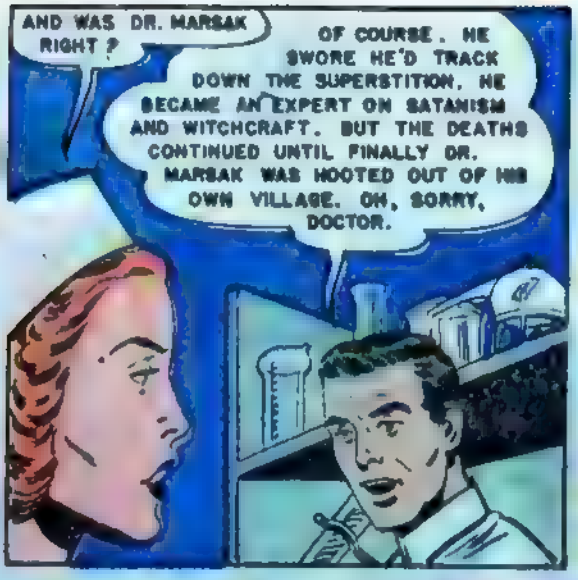
THAT POOR GRAVE-TENDER COULDN'T PREPARE FOR DEATH. IT MUST HAVE BEEN GHASTLY. I'M GLAD, THOUGH, DR. MARSAK DIDN'T READ ABOUT VAMPIRES DOING IT (AS ROONEY SUGGESTED); I'LL TELL HIM LATER WHEN THERE'S MORE TIME.

DOES DR. MARSAK BELIEVE IN THOSE FOOLISH TALES?

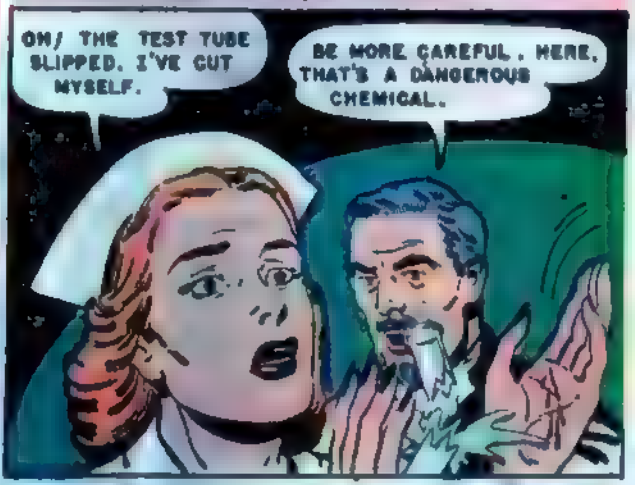
HEAVENS, NO! IN HIS YOUTH, HE WAS BANISHED FROM HIS OWN VILLAGE IN EUROPE, BECAUSE HE TRIED TO HELP THE PEASANTS CONQUER THEIR SUPERSTITIONS.

I DON'T THINK I REMEMBER THAT.. TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT IT, JIM... BEFORE DR. MARSAK GETS BACK.

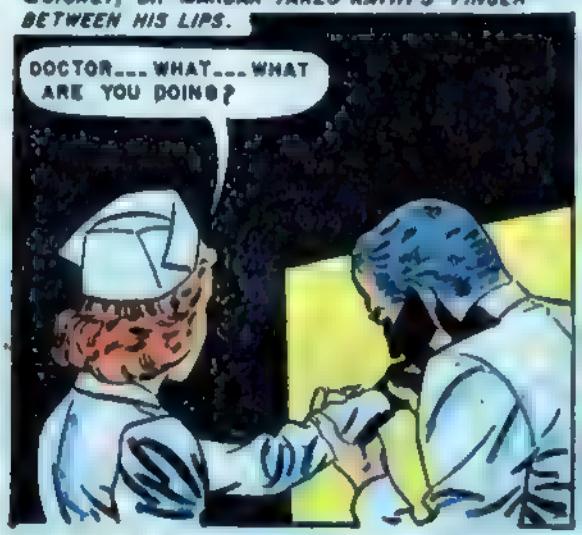
"MARSAK," JIM TELLS KATHY, "KNEW EVEN THEN THAT SCIENCE WOULD NOT ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF GHOULS OF DEATH.' BUT TO THE VILLAGERS THEY WERE REAL.
I FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF KLAUS, THE PEDDLER. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE BY NOW.
I HOPE HE DOES NOT TRAVEL BY NIGHT. THE VAMPIRES...
SUCH NONSENSE! THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS. WHY DO YOU NOT FIND OUT?
HA! LISTEN TO THE YOUNG DOCTOR-TO-BE MARSAK TALK. IF HE IS SO BRAVE, LET HIM MEET KLAUS AND COME HERE WITH HIM.
"SEIZING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SET THE VILLAGERS' FEARS AT REST, MARSAK WENT OUT ALONE TO FIND KLAUS. IT WAS A DARK, WILD NIGHT!"
FOOLS! I SHALL SHOW THEM. KLAUS MUST COME ALONG THIS TRAIL. AH, IS THAT THE SOUND OF HIS MULES' HOOVES I HEAR OVER THIS WILD WIND?
"SUDDENLY, A WILD, BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM RANG OUT IN THE DISTANCE."
KLAUS! WHAT HAPPENED?
"AS MARSAK BENT OVER TO AID THE STRICKEN MAN, SOMETHING ENVELOPED HIM..."
"...AND EVERYTHING WENT BLACK. IN THE MORNING, ANXIOUS VILLAGERS FOUND THEM... KLAUS WAS DEAD, STIFF, AND COLD. MARSAK WAS BARELY ALIVE."
THE VAMPIRE! WE TOLD YOU, YOU YOUNG FOOL.
NONSENSE. THE MULE WAS FRIGHTENED. HIS HOOF MUST HAVE STRUCK ME IN THE DARK.
SO MARSAK... HEH..HEH..HEH..! DIDN'T BELIEVE.. DID HE.. WELL.. READ ON.



NATURALLY, KATHY WAS VERY HAPPY IN HER JOB. FROM MARSAK SHE LEARNED MANY OF SCIENCE'S MYSTERIES. THEN ONE DAY, IN THE LAB.....



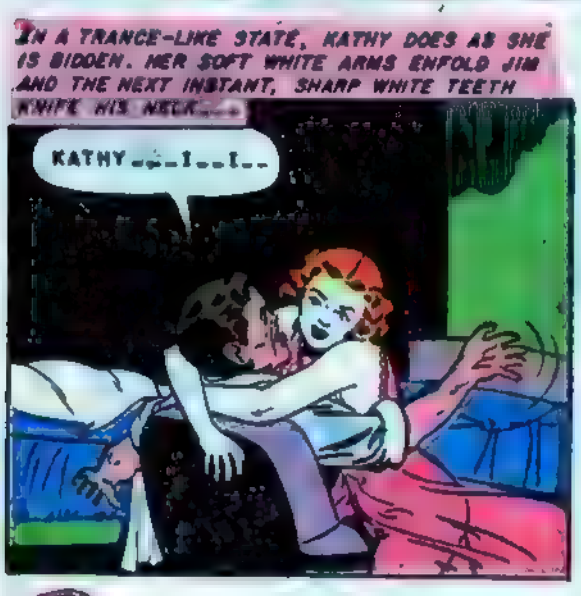
QUICKLY, DR MARSAK TAKES KATHY'S FINGER BETWEEN HIS LIPS.

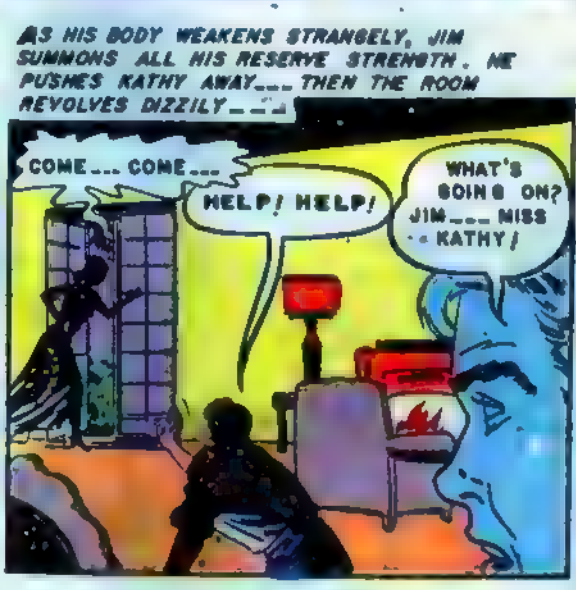


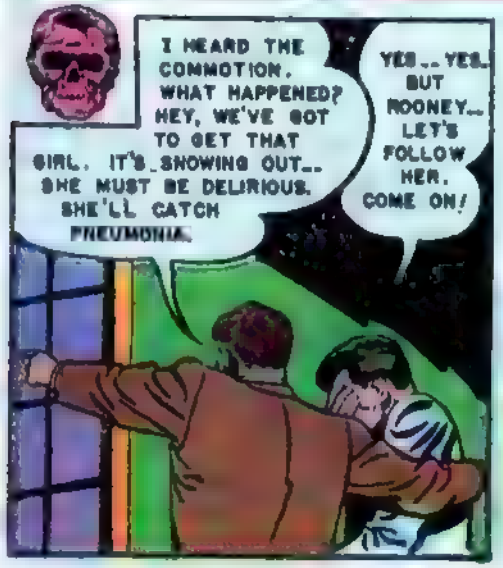
THAT EVENING, DINING AT THE BOARDING HOUSE WHERE THEY BOTH LIVE, KATHY TELLS JIM OF HER NEAR TRAGEDY.
I'M GLAD DR. MARSAK WAS THERE TO HELP. FEEL RIGHT ENOUGH FOR A MOVIE TONIGHT?
NO... I... GUESS I'M HAVING A LITTLE POST-ACCIDENT SHOCK I'D BETTER GET TO BED EARLY, JIM. MAYBE SOME OTHER NIGHT.
AND SO KATHY WENT TO BED EARLY, CONFIDENT THAT IN THE MORNING SHE'D FEEL BETTER. ENGROSSED IN HER BOOK, SHE DOESN'T SEE THE STRANGE FIGURE AT HER WINDOW...
ODD THAT I SHOULD FEEL SO WEAK.
SUDDENLY, THE WINDOW OPENS NOISELESSLY AND INTO THE ROOM COMES A CREATURE OF THE PITS. IT LEAPS, CUTTING KATHY'S SCREAM SHORT...
HELP!... UHHHH... AH...
BUT JIM HAD HEARD KATHY'S TERRIFIED CRY FOR HELP.
QUICK, ROONEY, PUT OUT THAT BLAZE. KATHY... KATHY...
BUT I TELL YOU, JIM, I SAW SOMETHING... LIKE A GIANT BAT!
NOW... NOW... BE QUIET. YOU MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP AND KNOCKED OVER THE LAMP. YOU CUT YOURSELF... ...THESE NICKS...
THE DOCTOR'S RIGHT, MISS KATHY. I'VE HAD NIGHTMARES MYSELF. I KNOW. BETTER GIVE HER A SEDATIVE, DOC. THEN I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.
AFTER GIVING KATHY A SEDATIVE, JIM DECIDES TO STAY BY HER...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ROONEY?
LOOK AT THIS! THE SAME MARKS WERE ON THAT DEAD GRAVEKEEPER. BUT I JUST CHECKED OUTSIDE HERE AND THERE AIN'T A FOOTPRINT.

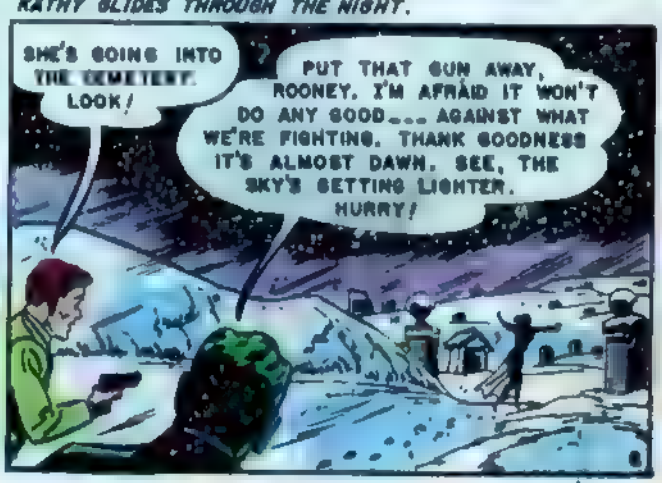
JUST A COINCIDENCE, ROONEY. GLASS CUTS. SAY, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE OFF ON THAT VAMPIRE ROUTINE AGAIN. GO ON TO BED. I'LL SIT UP WITH KATHY.
JUST THE SAME, I'LL BET IT AIN'T ALL FICTION. THERE MUST BE SOME TRUTH IN IT. OKAY, GOOD NIGHT. BUT I'M LOOKING AROUND AGAIN.

AS JIM KEEPS HIS VIGIL, HE DOZES... JUST A CATNAP. KATHY OPENS HER EYES AND SEES JIM... BUT SUDDENLY, FROM A DISTANCE; A SOFT, INSINUATING VOICE CALLS...
KATHY... KATHY... YOU WILL DO AS I BID YOU... AND THEN COME TO ME, MY LOVE...


IN A TRANCE-LIKE STATE, KATHY DOES AS SHE IS BIDDEN. HER SOFT WHITE ARMS ENFOLD JIM AND THE NEXT INSTANT, SHARP WHITE TEETH KNIFE HIS NECK...
KATHY...I...I...


AS HIS BODY WEAKENS STRANGELY, JIM SUMMONS ALL HIS RESERVE STRENGTH. HE PUSHES KATHY AWAY... THEN THE ROOM REVOLVES DIZZILY...
COME... COME...
HELP! HELP!
WHAT'S GOING ON? JIM... MISS KATHY!


I HEARD THE COMMOTION. WHAT HAPPENED? HEY, WE'VE GOT TO GET THAT GIRL. IT'S SNOWING OUT... SHE MUST BE DELIRIOUS. SHE'LL CATCH PNEUMONIA.
YES... YES. BUT ROONEY... LET'S FOLLOW HER. COME ON!


SEEMINGLY OBLIVIOUS OF THE SNOW AND BITING COLD, AS THOUGH ATTRACTED BY A MAGNETIC FORCE, KATHY GLIDES THROUGH THE NIGHT.
SHE'S GOING INTO THE CEMETERY. LOOK!
PUT THAT GUN AWAY, ROONEY. I'M AFRAID IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD... AGAINST WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING. THANK GOODNESS IT'S ALMOST DAWN. SEE, THE SKY'S GETTING LIGHTER. HURRY!

QUICKLY, JIM WRESTS A STAKE FROM A NEARBY DRIFT FENCE AND ORDERS ROONEY TO DO THE SAME... AS THE TOMB DOOR OPENS, AND KATHY VANISHES!!

HURRY, HURRY... ROONEY, GET A STAKE!

I THINK YOU'RE CRAZY, TOO, DOC... BUT YOU'RE A SCIENTIST, SO I'LL DO IT. BUT KATHY... LOOK SHE'S GOING INSIDE!

AS JIM AND DETECTIVE ROONEY ENTER THE TOMB, A GHASTLY SIGHT SENDS CHILLS OF HORROR UP AND DOWN THEIR SPINES.

DOC... THEY'RE DEAD! GLORY BE... ...I...I...

NO... NOT DEAD YET... ROONEY! NOT YET... BUT THEY'RE GOING TO BE.

HIS HEART HEAVY, BUT REALIZING WHAT MUST BE DONE, JIM DRIVES THE WOODEN SPIKE INTO MARSAK'S HEART. SUDDENLY, A CHILLING SCREAM ECHOES AND RE-ECHOES THROUGH THE TOMB.

GOOD-BYE, MARSAK, MY FRIEND. NOW MAY YOUR TORMENTED SOUL REST IN PEACE FOREVER.

A-A-A-E-E-E-E-E-E-E

DOC... DOC! THAT'S MURDER. WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHY? WHY?

A-A-A-E-E-E-E

BUT THE SCREAM WHICH STRUCK SUCH TERROR INTO ROONEY'S HEART, WAS NOT TORN FROM THE DEVIL-POSSESSED SOUL OF DR MARSAK, BUT FROM KATHY'S THROAT.

JIM... JIM... WHERE AM I?

KATHY... KATHY, DARLING. IT'S A MIRACLE! YOU'RE FLESH AND BLOOD STILL... MY DARLING!

WILL SOMEBODY TELL THE LAW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?

IT WAS WHILE I WAS DOZING IN KATHY'S ROOM THAT I THOUGHT OF MARSAK'S EXPERIENCE IN THE VILLAGE OF HIS YOUTH. I WAS THINKING OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED IF A VAMPIRE, AND NOT A MULE, HAD ATTACKED HIM. AND THEN SUDDENLY IT WAS CLEAR... HIS FIRST AID TO KATHY'S FINGER! HE COULDN'T HELP HIMSELF! TONIGHT, HE ATTACKED KATHY AGAIN, TO MAKE HER HIS SLAVE FOREVER. FORTUNATELY WE STOPPED HIM IN TIME.

DON'T YOU SEE, ROONEY. THE GRAVEYARD KEEPER MUST HAVE DISCOVERED HIS SECRET. MARSAK SLEPT HERE AFTER EACH ATTACK! THEN HE WOULD COME TO THE LABORATORY.

A REAL, GENUINE, VAMPIRE. IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

HOLD ME OH, JIM!

BUT DO YOU THINK THEY'D BELIEVE ME AT HEADQUARTERS? THE CHIEF SAID MARSAK JUST WENT NUTS... AND WHO WAS I TRYING TO KID? BUT YOU BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU?

THE END

A MIDNIGHT RIDE WITH DEATH

IT was one of those nights in late February when the world seems a cold and desolate place. Snow clouds hung in the skies like the curtains of impending doom, and the sharp penetrating wind blew unchecked from the North, chilling John Porter to the very marrow of his bones.

John Porter drew back the edge of his left glove to look at his watch, and noting the time hastily replaced the flap and plunged both hands, gloves and all, into his overcoat pockets. "Almost midnight," he shivered, "and that blasted bus isn't here yet!" Standing against the lamp post, taking advantage of the slight windbreak it afforded and grateful for the small pool of light it shed, John Porter had ample time to speculate on what had happened to delay his bus to make it *at least* an hour late and to roundly curse all buses, trains, taxis, and trolleys which left travelers quaking with cold on such nights as this.

It had been a long day at the office, he reflected. From eight o'clock in the morning to ten forty-five at night, he had toiled. Fourteen and a half hours of feverish activity to make that short deadline was bad enough, without standing on this street corner for more than an hour and a quarter waiting for a bus home while the freezing weather gnawed at his flesh like a ravenous animal.

"Ah-h-h, here comes the bus at last," John Porter sighed with relief, as headlights glowed dully in the distance. Once aboard, he'd be home in his warm bed in less than an hour. Such were the thoughts of John Porter as he waited for the arrival of his bus—home, warmth, and a soft cozy bed.

As the lights came steadily closer, John Porter squinted his eyes and peered into the teeth of the gale so as to see the bus better, as if this action would make its arrival any speedier. And then when the realization that the lights he had seen were not those of his bus, but merely those of a small pick-up truck, John Porter gasped in bitter disappointment. And yet, perhaps this truck was going in his direction. The thought occurred that perhaps if he could stop the little truck he might induce its driver to take him home—maybe for a dollar or two the man might be willing. With a cry, John Porter leaped into the street and with a waving of hands brought the vehicle to a stop.

"I—I'm stuck out here w—without any way of g—getting h—home," John Porter stuttered through lips blue with frost. "Can you give me a lift? I—I'll make it worth your while!"

"Please do come in," came the soft reply from the truck and John Porter wasted no time accepting the invitation, pulling open the door and huddling in beside the driver. "Where are you headed?" the driver asked in a low, mild voice.

"Roslindale," John Porter said. "That's only a few towns away from here. If you keep headed south on this road you pass right through—"

"I know," the driver answered in a voice so quiet and gentle that John Porter had to listen very closely. "I've been to Roslindale many times. In fact, I have two stops there tonight. One on Janus Street and the other on Ruthven Place."

"Ruthven Place!" John Porter fairly shouted. "What luck! I live on Ruthven Place! You can take me practically to my door without going out of your way! What wonderful luck!" The driver did not reply.

As his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness inside the truck, John Porter took stock of his surroundings and the man who had been so kind as to give him a lift. The truck was unlike any he had ever seen. It was one of those foreign makes, John Porter decided, and it ran pretty good too. Why, try as he would he couldn't hear the motor. And the driver, he must be a foreigner, too. He was a little man. Hardly more than five feet tall and very thin. He was dressed all in black and he wore a short black cape. It was the cape which convinced John Porter that the man was not American. "Nobody dresses that way in this country," he thought. The man, himself, outside of his unusual dress and his slight build, was a very ordinary looking individual. He looked more like an elderly floor-walker in a big department store than he did a truck driver—except for his eyes, which were bright and piercing with an inner light all of their own, like a cat's. Looking at this little man, John Porter suddenly had the feeling that all was not well. He couldn't explain what it was that he felt, but for an uneasy moment he wished he were still on that freezing street corner waiting for the bus which did not come.

"What nonsense is this?" he almost cried aloud. "The wind must have addled my brains!" And then, addressing the driver, "It certainly is a bad night. I'm very grateful to you for stopping for me."

The sound of the driver's voice was almost like an echo coming from afar. "Yes, I suppose it is a nasty night for you. All nights are pretty much the same to me. And I very seldom pick up hitchhikers. The only reason I did is because I have a

feeling that you must be at a certain place at a certain time tonight."

That was a very strange reply. John Porter didn't like the sound of the man's voice, much less the words that he spoke. Perhaps he was riding with a madman. Well, he'd humor him along until they stopped and then he'd jump out and get away.

But the little driver gave him no cause to think he was mad. His actions were deliberate. He drove well. John Porter remembered the black cape and decided that all foreigners seem a bit strange to Americans until they get to know them. They rode on in silence.

Abruptly the truck slid to a stop. The driver looked at John Porter and unsmilingly said, "I have something to get here. I won't be a moment."

John Porter watched him take a small empty box from the rear of the truck and walk up the path leading to the house they had parked in front of, and without knocking, enter through the large front door. "Hmph!" John Porter snorted, "A delivery man walking in the front door, and not even knocking! He'll get the 'heave-ho' fast enough!" But the little man did not get the "heave-ho," as John Porter put it. As John Porter watched the front door, something fastened to that door caught his eye in the darkness. It was round. It was uneven. It was . . . *it was a funeral wreath!* A bolt of shock quivvered through his legs. Even as the realization that this was a house of death struck him, the little driver returned, struggling under the weight of the small box which he had apparently filled in the house.

"All right," the driver said, almost cheerily, "Let's go. I have one more stop to make before I go to your street." John Porter did not answer. For some reason he was frightened, terribly frightened, although he was taller, younger, and no doubt stronger than the little driver of this truck.

After what seemed an eternity, the truck stopped again. The little driver looked at his stick of cards which he kept in his pocket and said, "197 Janus Street, Roslindale. Good. I'll be right back. I have another pick-up here."

John Porter watched him again. Once more the slight little man in the black cape walked up the front path with a small empty box. Once more he neither knocked nor rang, but entered through the front door. And once more, John Porter saw to his pure horror, the door bore *the black wreath of death!*

John Porter fumbled with the door latch and sprung out. Nothing could induce him to continue to ride with that horrid little man with the morbid occupation. *Just what was his occupation*, by the way, which dealt with making the rounds of houses which had recently known death? Curiosity overcame fear and John Porter, himself, walked up the path to the house with the wreath. Not to the door! Oh no, nothing could make him enter. Instead, to the windows on the side of the house, John Porter went.

There was a window to someone's bedroom, John Porter could tell by the curtains, and stepping close to the pane, he peered in! There before him was a scene which burned his eyes with a terrible fear and horror unknown to description. There was the little driver bending over the bed on which a dead man lay with arms folded across its chest in *rigor mortis*. The little driver was speaking to the corpse and nodding, as if he had received his answer from the tight white lips of the body on the bed. Forthwith, the little man withdrew a box from beneath his black cape, opened it, and closed it without seemingly putting anything into it. But when he turned to leave the room, he struggled beneath the weight of the box as though it now contained solid lead!

Suppressing a shriek, John Porter ran. Faster and faster he fled. He lost his hat, his scarf fell away, his heart beat like a trip hammer and his chest ached with the strain of his long wild flight. Even as he ran to get away from the scene he had just witnessed, even as his brain fevered with the sight he had just seen, the sickening remembrance of the driver's words came back to him. . . . *"Two stops in Roslindale . . . one on Janus Street . . . one on Ruthven Place. . . .* Ruthven Place! John Porter's street!

The light in the window of John Porter's house beckoned to him as his running feet disobeyed the pleading of his tortured lungs. Even if he wanted to stop his mad race short of his house, John Porter could not have done so, for Panic was his master.

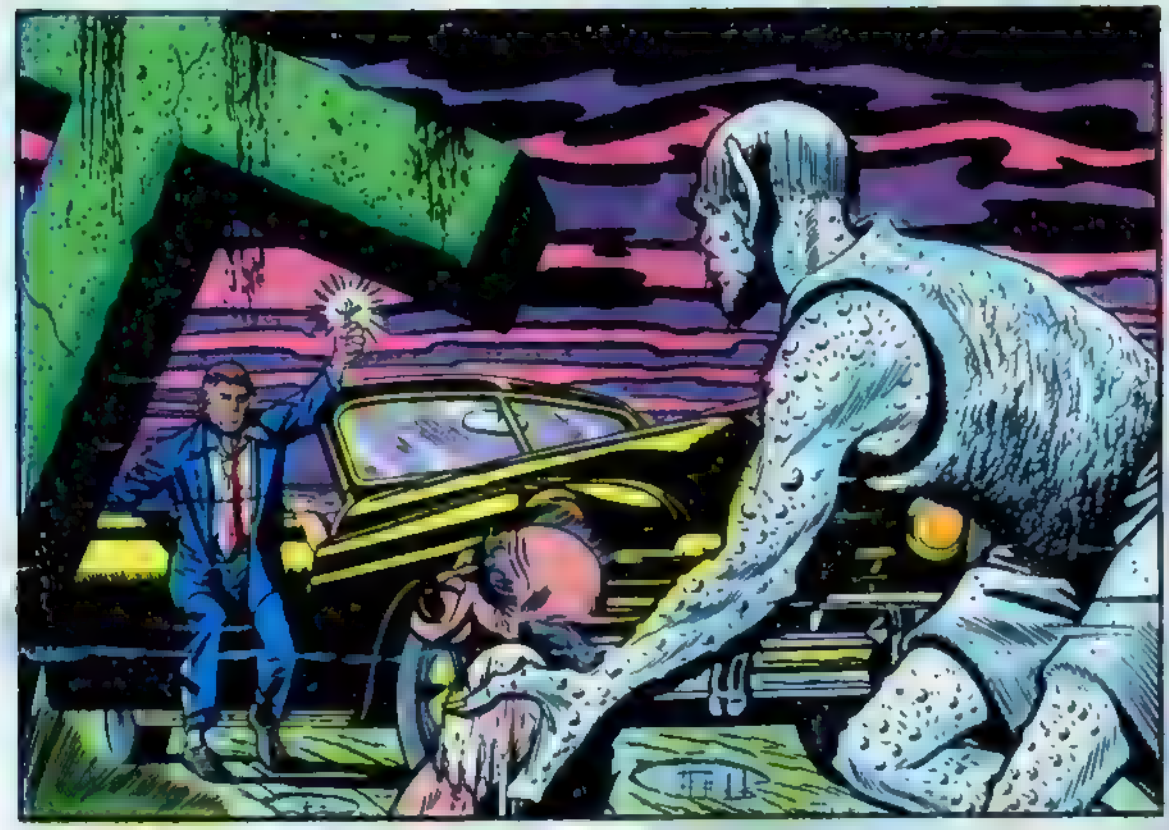
As he lunged for his house, John Porter tripped and fell. As his head struck the edge of the front step with a sickening crunch, all the blackness in the universe seemed to close in. For eternities it seemed thus, and then the blackness lifted like a mist before a soft mild voice. John Porter could not move, could not open his eyes, but he could see! The little man in the black cape bent over him with an empty box.

"John Porter," the little driver said, "the last stop in Roslindale was for you. I had to give you that ride, you see, because no one must miss his appointment with death!"

And John Porter somehow knew the little man was right. He feared no longer. His soul was released and put in the box by the little man in black and John Porter returned to the world of blackness to eternal rest.

ALAN SAXTON WAS A CYNICAL YOUNG MAN! HE HAD NO FEAR OF AGE-OLD HORRORS SUMMONED FROM THE ABYSS OF COSMIC GHOULS THAT ROAM THE ETHER IN SEARCH OF PREY... OF COUNTLESS THINGS THAT WALK BY NIGHT-- *UNTIL*-- HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE HORRIBLE APPARITION OF VINCENT ZOLTAN ON ITS MISSION OF...

The UNHOLY QUEST



WHEN THE MYSTERIOUS VINCENT ZOLTAN WAS BURIED, THE ENTIRE TOWN OF CHATTAM, MAINE TURNED OUT FOR HIS FUNERAL. AMONG THEM WAS ALAN SAXTON, THE WRITER!

IT'S NO USE! HE DIDN'T EVEN WAIT TO HEAR MY ANSWER. NOW THAT MY INTEREST IS AROUSED, I'LL VISIT HIM TONIGHT IF I HAVE TO FLY!

AND LATER THAT NIGHT, AS ALAN SAXTON WAS WALKING TO HIS UNCLE'S HOUSE....

UNCLE MAT LOOKED WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING! I THINK THAT'S HIS HOUSE ON THE HILL.

HEH-HEH...

ALAN SAXTON! YES, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE... HEH, HEH, ..IT'S MY BUSINESS TO KNOW *EVERYTHING!* THAT'S WHY I MUST WARN YOU... OVER THERE LIES *DANGER!* DON'T GO..

DANGER? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? SAY, WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY? HERE, COME BACK!

REMEMBER WHAT I SAID. BEWARE OF THAT HOUSE--IT HOLDS DEATH! HEH-HEH-HEH!

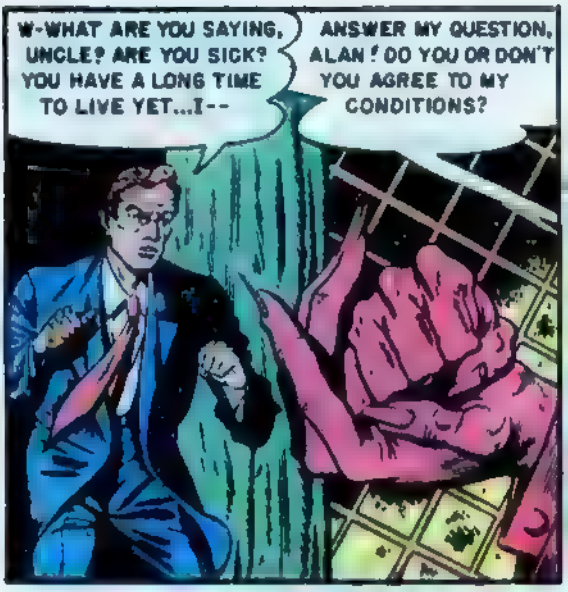
A PUZZLED ALAN SOON ARRIVED AT THE HOUSE...

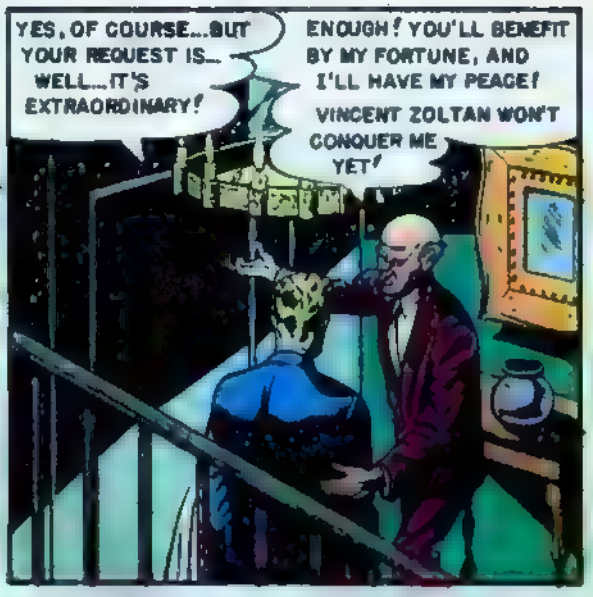
GOOD! YOU'RE ON TIME! COME INSIDE THE LIBRARY!

UNCLE... ON THE WAY OVER HERE, I MET AN OLD WOMAN WHO...WELL... I GUESS IT'S NOT IMPORTANT!

ALAN WISELY KEPT QUIET ABOUT THE INCIDENT, AND MAT SAXTON CAME IMMEDIATELY TO THE POINT!

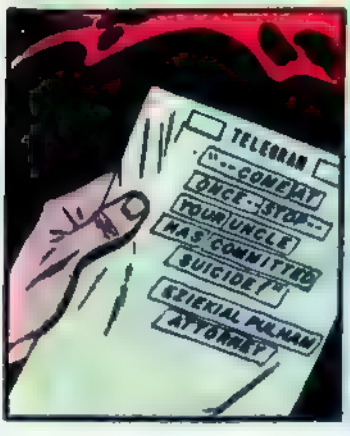
AS THE LAST OF THE SAXTONS, I INTEND TO LEAVE MY MONEY TO YOU... BUT YOU MUST AGREE TO PROTECT THE VAULT HARBORING MY BODY—*AFTER I'M GONE!* NO ONE MUST TOUCH IT.



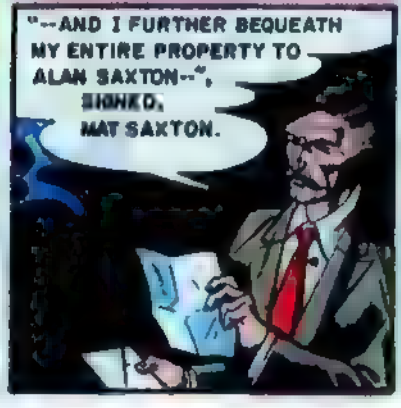


MUTTERING THUS TO HIMSELF, THE OLD MAN CALLED FOR HIS CARETAKER WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL!

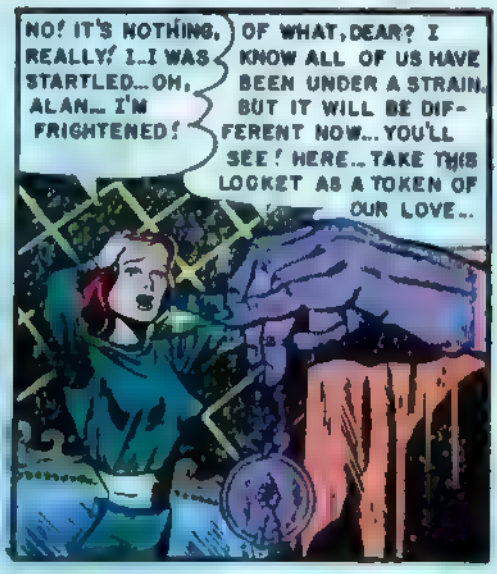
THE YOUNG MAN WENT HOME THAT NIGHT THINKING THAT HIS UNCLE HAD LOST HIS MIND! THREE DAYS LATER, A TELEGRAM ARRIVED FOR HIM...



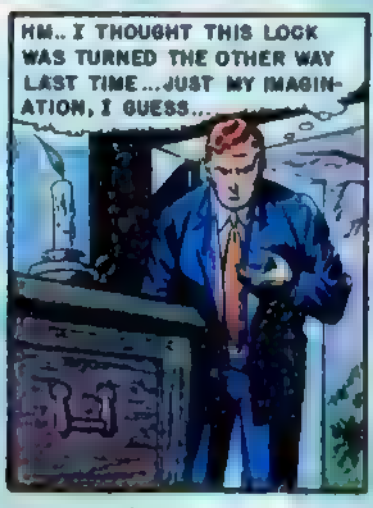
SHOCKED, AND MUCH DISTURBED, ALAN LIVED THROUGH A WEEK OF CONFUSION WHAT WITH SETTLING HIS UNCLE'S AFFAIRS AND ARRANGING HIS BURIAL...THEN CAME THE READING OF THE WILL...

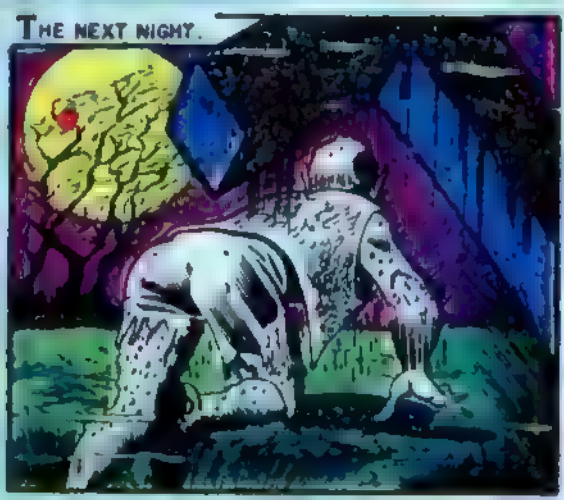


BUT NOTHING CAME OUT OF THE INVESTIGATION.. ALAN SETTLED IN HIS UNCLE'S HOUSE... IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT HE WOULD BE ATTRACTED TO THE BEAUTIFUL CARETAKER...

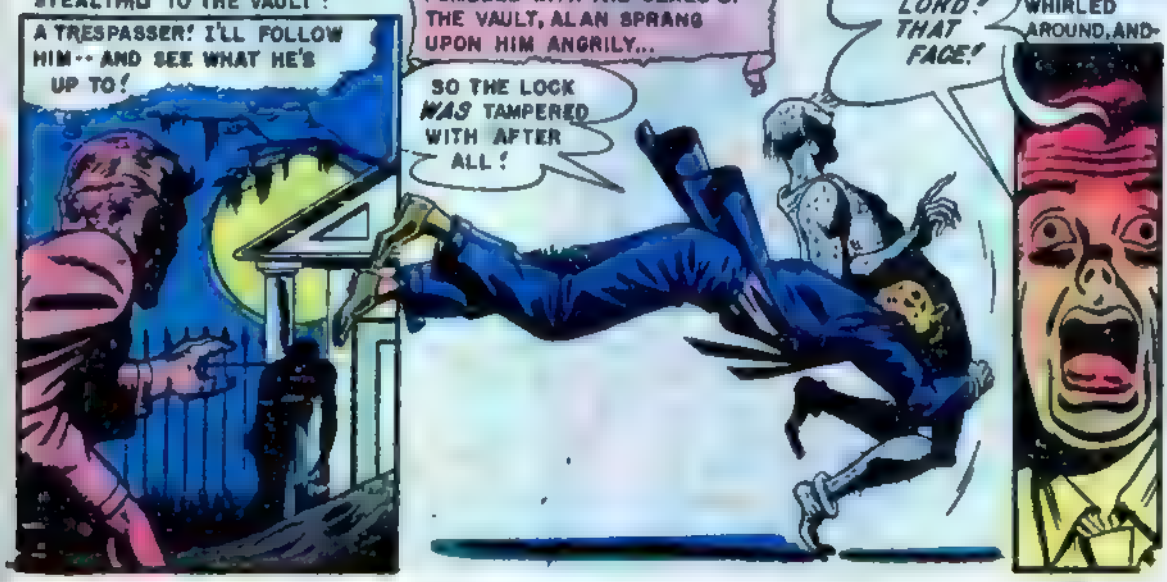


INDEED, THE ONLY TASK THAT MARRED ALAN'S CONTENTMENT, WAS A NIGHTLY INSPECTION OF THE BURIAL VAULT'S SEALS-ACCORDING TO HIS UNCLE'S WISHES! THOUGH TRIVIAL, IT HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY IRRITATING..





ALAN, OUT FOR A STROLL, SEES THE FIGURE MAKE ITS WAY STEALTHILY TO THE VAULT!



TEN YEARS AGO, YOUR UNCLE ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR BLACK MAGIC WHICH ONLY ZOLTAN COULD SATISFY...! THEY BECAME FRIENDS, AND OFTEN SPENT NIGHTS CONDUCTING HORRIBLE EXPERIMENTS EVEN I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT—!

THEN, FINDING OUT ZOLTAN FOR THE EVIL MONSTER THAT HE WAS, YOUR UNCLE TRIED TO BREAK AWAY FROM HIM, BUT COULD NOT! SO HE KILLED HIM THROUGH SORCERY, THUS FREEING ME... I BECAME HIS CARETAKER...

YOUR UNCLE DUG HIM OUT AND BURIED HIM IN THE BACKYARD WITH THE PROPER SPELLS! BUT HE FORGOT THAT ZOLTAN COULD RETURN TO LIFE, FOR THOSE KILLED BY SORCERY ROAM BETWEEN THE WORLDS IN SEARCH OF THEIR MURDERERS!

YES, THOSE KILLED BY SORCERY CANNOT REST, BUT SEEK THEIR KILLER'S BODY AND SOUL.

MAT SAXTON COMMITTED SUICIDE SO THAT HIS SOUL WOULD NOT BE FORFEIT TO ZOLTAN! BUT HIS BODY WAS VULNERABLE TO ZOLTAN'S SPIRIT WHO COULD USE IT FOR A NEW EXISTENCE ON EARTH! FOR THAT REASON, IT HAD TO BE PROTECTED...UNTIL IT FINALLY DECOMPOSED!

THIS IS...UNBELIEVABLE! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME? WHY?

YOU WOULD ONLY HAVE LAUGHED AT ME! THE TOWNSPEOPLE WOULD HAVE GOSSIPED...AND... AND I DIDN'T WANT THAT--YOU SEE, I..I LOVE YOU, TOO! HEAVEN FORGIVE, BUT I DO!

LISTEN, DARLING! THERE *MUST* BE A WAY TO FIGHT THE GHOST! DID MY UNCLE HAVE SOME BOOKS, OR SPELLS?

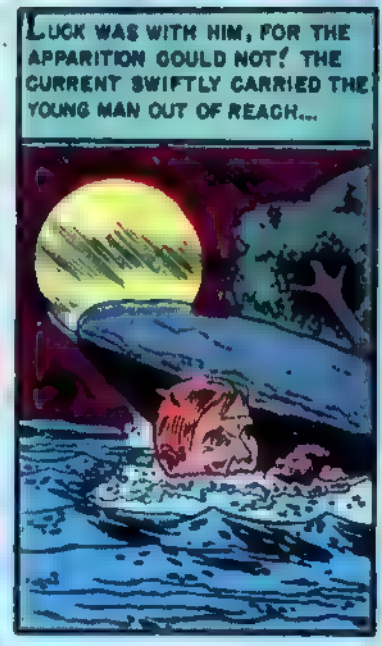
YES. YES...DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CELLAR... OH, ALAN...PLEASE HURRY! I HAVE A STRANGE PREMONITION OF DEATH...I TOLD YOU TOO MUCH!

BUT A THIRD PRESENCE WAS IN THE ROOM, AND WHEN ALAN HAD RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS...

WHY DID---YOU TELL HIM MY SECRET, MY DEAR?

YOU!

THE CREATURE WRAPPED ITS SINUOUS COILS AROUND THE HORRIFIED GIRL...AND A TERRIBLE TRANSFORMATION TOOK PLACE!



MINUTES LATER, HE WAS RUNNING DOWN THE ROAD ALONG WHICH THE LAWYER MUST COME.

WHILE PULHAM DROVE FRANTICALLY TOWARD THE HOUSE, ALAN EXPLAINED AS MUCH AS HE COULD TO HIS FRIEND! SECONDS LATER...

GOOD LORD, THE MONSTER! AND I..I DIDN'T QUITE BELIEVE YOU!

HURRY! WE MUST REACH ZOLTAN'S BODY AND BURN IT BEFORE THE "THING" GETS THERE. THEN, IT WILL HAVE NOTHING TO GO BACK TO...

STOP HERE! THIS IS WHERE ZOLTAN'S BODY IS BURIED! WE'VE GOT TO DIG IT OUT AND BURN IT OURSELVES BEFORE THAT THING GETS THERE. THEN JOAN MAY COME BACK TO ME. UNCLE MAT COULDN'T DO IT BECAUSE THE GHOST WOULD STILL HAVE REMAINED ALIVE!

MINUTES PASSED AS PULHAM AND ALAN WORKED FEVERISHLY TO UNCOVER THE REMAINS!

HURRY, CAN'T YOU? THE CREATURE IS COMING! IT KNOWS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO!

OKAY--BUILD THAT FIRE! I'VE..UGH.. REACHED THE COFFIN!

THE LAST FRAGMENT OF SKELETON CAUGHT FIRE WHEN THE APPARITION UTTERED A SCREAM OF PAIN AND FURY--PUSHED MADLY TOWARDS THEM--AND SHOT ABRUPTLY INTO SPACE!

LOOK! THERE'S A SECOND COMPARTMENT IN THIS COFFIN! --THE BODY OF A WOMAN DEAD FOR MANY YEARS... AND THERE'S A LOCKET AROUND HER NECK! GOOD LORD-- IT'S... IT'S--

JOAN

ARE YOU SURE THERE EVER WAS A JOAN?

AS THE TWO MEN STARED WITH HORROR AT THE MUMMIFIED FIGURE OF THE THING THAT HAD CALLED ITSELF "JOAN", THE TERRIBLE MEANING BECAME VERY CLEAR: A GREATER AND LONGER TORTURE HAD BEGUN FOR BOTH VINCENT ZOLTAN AND HIS COMPANION WHO HAD DABBLED IN BLACK MAGIC AND LOST. WHAT HAPPENED TO JOAN, WAS THERE REALLY A JOAN?

-END-

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YOUR MONEY BACK QUICK IF YOU CAN BUY FOR LESS ELSEWHERE

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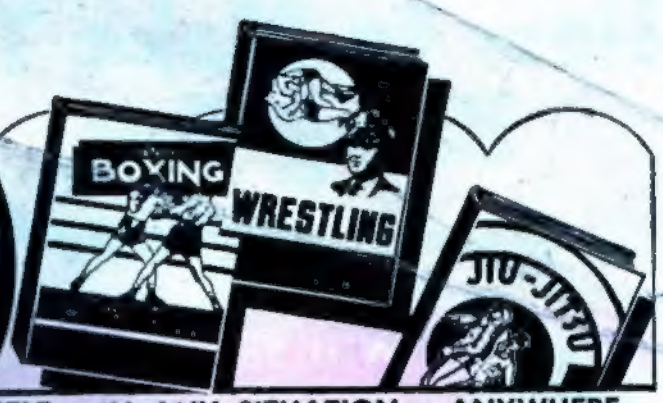

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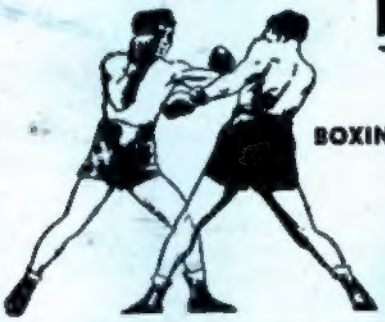

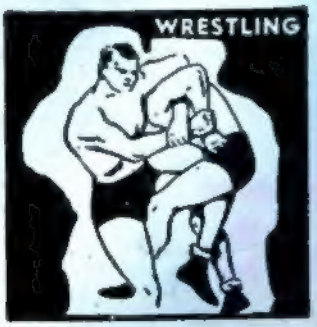

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